United Nations ST/IC/2001/86

Secretariat

2 November 2001

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Under-Secretary-General for Management

Subject: **Membership of the panels of counsel**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite current and retired staff members to volunteer to serve on the panels of counsel, which exist at Headquarters, Geneva, Vienna and Addis Ababa.

2. In accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/351 of 25 May 1988, which set out the policy applicable to the system of counsel, the panels of counsel constitute an essential part of the internal system of administration of justice and their members provide information, advice and, where appropriate, representation to staff members in disciplinary, appeal and other internal recourse procedures within the Secretariat. Members of the panels function independently of both staff representative bodies and the Administration so as to exercise a substantial measure of autonomy and self-regulation.

3. Service as counsel is a generous expression of the ideals that motivate the international civil service and is recognized and supported by the Administration in that spirit. To ensure that the internal justice system continues to function smoothly and effectively, it is essential to maintain an adequate membership of the panels. To that end, I would like to urge staff members, as well as retirees, to volunteer for service on the panels of counsel. There is a need for counsel with administrative and legal experience, irrespective of grade, to volunteer their knowledge and experience to assist colleagues with regard to problems concerning their conditions of service under the Staff Rules, including assistance with correspondence related to such problems. Counsel may be from every part of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

4. New members of the Panel of Counsel at Headquarters will be trained through a programme of seminars provided by the Coordinator of the Panel at Headquarters. Counsel elsewhere may access summaries of the seminars on the web site created by the Office of the Coordinator, New York Panel of Counsel. The web site may be found on the United Nations Intranet under "United Nations

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Departments/Department of Management" (intranet/poc/deptpoc.htm) and is now available on the Internet (http://www.un.org/staff/panelofcounsel).

5. Staff members at Headquarters interested in membership should contact Catherine Claxton, Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel at Headquarters in room 1B-1A, extensions 3-3954 and 3-3957. Staff members in Geneva should contact René Vargas, Coordinator, Geneva Panel of Counsel, telephone: (41-22) 917 1611, email: r.vargas@unog.ch. Staff members in Vienna should contact Marta Souza, Coordinator, Vienna Panel of Counsel, room E-910, telephone: (43-1) 26060 5788. Staff members at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) should contact Lakew Assefa, Coordinator, ECA Panel of Counsel, Room 4NC6, ECA, Addis Ababa, telephone: (25 11) 44 36 27 or (25 11) 51 72 00, extension 33627, facsimile number: (25 11) 51 50 85, email: lassefa@hotmail.com. Staff members serving at other duty stations should contact the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel at Headquarters. Retired staff members interested in membership should likewise contact the above-mentioned officials, as appropriate. The new membership of the panels of counsel will be published on the Panel of Counsel web site.

6. The present circular supersedes information circular ST/IC/1999/109 of 16 December 1999.